

Adopted Interim Policy Resolutions

2021 Virtual Legislative Conference

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT	. 1
Interim Resolution on FY 2022 Appropriations for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development	1
Interim Resolution on Expanding Federal Residential Eviction Moratorium	1
the Use of Low Income Housing Tax Credits	
ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND LAND USE	
Interim Resolution Encouraging Congress to Enact the National Heritage Area Act to Establish Uniform Criteria, Oversight, Accountability and Funding Stability for Congressionally-designated National Heritage Areas (NHA)	
Interim Resolution to Protect and Enhance Pollinator Species and their Habitat throughout our Nation's Counties	
Interim Resolution Supporting the Inclusion of Local Government Entities within CWA Section 404 Permitting Exclusions	
Interim Resolution Supporting the Development of a National Equity Map	4
FINANCE, PENSIONS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS	. 5
Interim Resolution Supporting Legislation to Make State and Local Governments Eligible Receive Payroll Tax Credits Authorized Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act	e
HEALTH	. 6
Interim Resolution on Prioritizing Racial Health Equity in A National COVID-19 Vaccination Program	. 6
Interim Resolution Encouraging Congress to Fund Creative Arts Therapies for Treating Veterans	
Interim Resolution Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Community Violence	7
Interim Resolution Supporting Mental Health Funding and Programs	
Conditions or Developmental Disabilities	7 8
HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION	
Interim Resolution Encouraging Congress to Provide the Resources Necessary for Developing and Expanding Arts and Cultural Programming in Counties	
Interim Resolution to Update the Thrifty Food Plan Used to Calculate Benefits for the	
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	9
Interim Resolution to Guarantee Access to Federal Child Nutrition Programs	
JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY	11

Interim Resolution in Opposition to Proposed Changes in the Public Assistance Program Until the COVID-19 Crisis is Resolved	
Interim Resolution Encouraging Congress to Fund the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Incentive Grants at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevent	tion
Interim Resolution Directing the U.S. Department of Justice to Provide Increased Fundin to Local Law Enforcement for the Procurement of Body Cameras	ıg
PUBLIC LANDS	13
Proposed Resolution on County Approval in Land and Water Conservation Fund Implementation	13
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY	14
Interim Resolution to Ensure the Participation of County Officials in the Development ar Implementation of Broadband Expansion Efforts	
TRANSPORTATION	15
Interim Resolution Directing the U.S. Department of Transportation to Reinstate the Loc Labor Hiring Preference Pilot Program	
Interim Resolution Supporting Local Preference Programs on Federally-Funded Transportation & Infrastructure Projects	

COMMUNITY, ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Interim Resolution on FY 2022 Appropriations for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

Issue: Support Fiscal Year 2022 appropriations for the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

 Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to support the following levels of funding for core U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill: no less than \$4.2 billion in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) formula funding; no less than \$1.7 billion in formula funding for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program (HOME); \$3 billion for Homeless Housing Assistance grants, including at least \$290 million for the Emergency Solutions Grant program plus an amount to fully fund expiring supportive housing and Shelter Plus Care rent subsidy contracts; expansion of the Section 8 voucher program in addition to full funding for existing Section 8 project-based and tenant-based contracts; \$40 million for HUD-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (VASH) and \$500 million in Section 108 Loan Guarantee authority.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution on Expanding Federal Residential Eviction Moratorium

Issue: The federal halt on residential evictions during the COVID-19 pandemic is scheduled to expire March 31, 2021.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the federal government to implement a comprehensive halt on residential evictions to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 until the federal public health emergency declaration is rescinded. NACo further urges Congress to provide additional funding and flexibility to state, county, local and tribal governments to administer rental assistance and additional housing stability supports throughout the duration of the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution Supporting Changes to Private Activity Bond Requirements to Increase the Use of Low Income Housing Tax Credits

Issue: The requirement that affordable housing developments use tax-exempt bonds for 50 percent of aggregate basis of buildings and land in order to access the 4 percent Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) is an inefficient use of scarce private activity bond (PAB) authority.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports legislation to amend Section 42 of the Internal Revenue Code to lower the aggregate basis for housing developments using private activity

bonds from 50 percent to 25 percent in order to increase the amount of 4 percent Low Income Housing Tax Credits available to develop more affordable housing.

Adopted | **March 19, 2021**

Interim Resolution in Support of Permanent Authorization for EB-5 Regional Center Program

Issue: The EB-5 Regional Center Program (the "Program") authorization expires on June 30, 2021. Long-term authorization by the U.S. Congress is needed to ensure the Program can achieve maximum economic impact and job creation by creating certainty in the marketplace.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports bipartisan federal legislation developed by Senator Grassley (R-IA) and Senator Leahy (D-VT) to reauthorize the EB-5 Regional Center Program for five years and to ensure any reform of the EB-5 Regional Center Program maintains the ability to deliver job-creating capital to American communities, avoids retroactive application of new law on matters already filed, allows for economic impact models to be used in measuring job creation and enhances program integrity measures.

ENVIRONMENT, ENERGY AND LAND USE

Interim Resolution Encouraging Congress to Enact the National Heritage Area Act to Establish Uniform Criteria, Oversight, Accountability and Funding Stability for Congressionally-designated National Heritage Areas (NHA)

 Issue: Currently, 591 counties across the country are home to 55 National Heritage Areas (NHAs) authorized by Congress. The NHA request begins at the local level and is presented by a member of the State's Congressional delegation for authorization by Congress. The authorization assists counties and provides funding stability to improve the local economy, quality of life, and tax base through locally-controlled public-private partnerships which foster investment in historic preservation and natural resource conservation.

Thirty of these NHAs need reauthorization in 2021, with most others facing the same prospect in the next few years. The National Heritage Area Act will replace this haphazard system of individual reauthorizations with a standardized, nationwide program. In December 2020, similar legislation was approved by the U.S. House on a bi-partisan voice vote but was not acted on by the Senate.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to pass the National Heritage Area Act of 2021, as it will assist counties to enhance their historic, cultural and natural resources.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution to Protect and Enhance Pollinator Species and their Habitat throughout our Nation's Counties

Issue: Farmers depend on pollinator species such as bees, butterflies, moths, hoverflies, flower beetles, pollen wasps, some birds, and some bats to successfully produce approximately one-third of all United States agricultural output. Pollinators play a crucial role in the production of fibers, edible oils, medicines, and other products. Given the breadth, severity, and persistence of alarming pollinator losses, it is critical that the federal government work collaboratively with state and local officials to expand efforts to reverse pollinator losses and help restore populations to healthy levels.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports federal efforts to protect pollinators by working collaboratively with state and local officials on best management practices to enhance pollinator-friendly habitat and encourages our federal partners to provide education, technical assistance, conservation efforts and incentives to conserve pollinators' health.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution Supporting the Inclusion of Local Government Entities within CWA Section 404 Permitting Exclusions

Issue: The Clean Water Act (CWA) provides an exemption from permitting under Section 404 for normal ongoing silvicultural activities and operations, provided that they follow the recommendations provided by the respective State Department of Environmental Quality.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) to include local government public works general maintenance and repair projects in Clean Water Act Section 404 permitting exclusions.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution Supporting the Development of a National Equity Map

Issue: Access to geographic data at a scale and resolution is the framework for policy decisions. It is critical that accurate data is available to develop policies on current county issues, such as social inequity accentuated by civil unrest, the COVID-19 pandemic, and climate change. Scientific data has highlighted the extent of social stratification by race and class, leading to social and environmental injustice disproportionately impacting people of color, indigenous people, and those living in poverty. Understanding the distribution and nuances underpinning these inequities is vital to addressing them. A National Equity Map would enable Counties to assess whether and to what extent underserved communities face systemic barriers in accessing benefits and opportunities from County policies and programs.

 Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports the following federal efforts to develop a national equity map to provide accurate data and geographic information at a scale and resolution that helps ensure evidence-based policy decisions on social and environmental equity at a local level:

1) Executive Order 14008, Section 222(a), which requires the Chair of the Council on Environmental Quality, within 6 months of the date of this order, to create a geospatial Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool and annually publish interactive maps highlighting disadvantaged communities. And

 2) S. 101- 117th Congress (2021-2022): A bill to establish the Environmental Justice Mapping Committee and for other purposes.

1	FINANCE, PENSIONS AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS
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3	Interim Resolution Supporting Legislation to Make State and Local Governments Eligible to
4	Receive Payroll Tax Credits Authorized Under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act
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6	Issue: Under current law, state and local governments are not eligible to receive the emergency paid leave
7	payroll tax credit established under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA).
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9	Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to immediately pass a
10	legislative fix in future COVID-19 response proposals that would extend the emergency leave payroll tax
11	credit to state and local governments.
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HEALTH

Interim Resolution on Prioritizing Racial Health Equity in A National COVID-19 Vaccination Program

Issue: The COVID-19 pandemic has disproportionately impacted minority and low-income communities, and emerging research indicates the share of vaccinations among those communities is smaller than their share of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the federal government to prioritize racial health equity as a central component of a national COVID-19 vaccine program. NACo further urges Congress to enact additional emergency supplemental appropriations to fund coordination among federal, state, county, local and tribal government to ensure Black, LatinX, Native, immigrant and other communities of color have equitable access to vaccines; address the legitimate concerns of communities of color who have low confidence in the government and scientific community due to consistently poor health outcomes as well as historical and systematic mistreatment; strengthen local and community-based public health infrastructure; encourage comprehensive, research-based communications campaigns to address misinformation in minority communities regarding the vaccines; and expand, train and sustain a community-based workforce to aid in vaccine distribution.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution Encouraging Congress to Fund Creative Arts Therapies for Treating Veterans

Issue: The U.S. House defense appropriations bill includes language to support increased support for creative arts therapies for treating U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) service members with traumatic brain injuries and psychological health conditions. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) appropriations bill also has language to support creative arts therapies for military veterans and includes \$5 million for creative arts therapies in treating veterans through the VA's Whole Health initiative.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the federal government to fund creative arts therapies for treating service members and veterans with traumatic brain injuries and psychological health conditions within the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) appropriations bill and the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) appropriation bill. NACo supports the first-time funding of \$5 million for creative arts therapies in treating veterans through the VA's Whole Health initiative, and further, building upon FY 2020 language and appropriations, supports the expansion of DOD and VA programs to provide clinical services and other care to service members and veterans in all counties, parishes and boroughs.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Community Violence

Issue: Examining the adverse impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on domestic violence.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to direct the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in conjunction with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), to provide a comprehensive joint study to Congressional Committees of jurisdiction on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on community violence including the collection and analysis of gun sales as well as intimate partner and domestic violence data. NACo also reaffirms its call to Congress for continued funding to collect community violence data, research to better understand the causes of community violence, and development of prevention strategies to limit community violence.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution Supporting Mental Health Funding and Programs

Issue: Robust funding for mental health programs is needed now more than ever as the COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on many Americans' mental health and well-being since its onset.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and the administration to prioritize mental health care that enhances counties' ability to provide local systems of care by: (1) increasing federal funding for mental health programs under the Department of Health and Human Service's (HHS's) Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and (2) supporting a set-aside mental health fund for state, county, and other local governments in addition to regularly appropriated funding for the aforementioned mental health programs to specifically address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and substance abuse within their jurisdictions.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution on Crisis Response Methods for People with Behavioral Health Conditions or Developmental Disabilities

Issue: Without adequately resourced crisis response systems in place, counties rely heavily on law enforcement staff and institutionalization, especially through jails and prisons, with the result being cost burden to public systems and poor outcomes for people in crisis.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports federal policy that would assist counties through funding and technical assistance, in addressing behavioral health crises by implementing the following: 1) crisis first responders with specialized skills and training, including social workers and mental health professionals, who can alert law enforcement as needed (e.g., the CAHOOTS model); 2) Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training required for law enforcement; 3) 24 hour walk-in crisis centers, accessible to all whether brought by a peer, family member, police officer or on their own, where a person in crisis or pre-crisis can obtain the resources they need to alleviate or avert the crisis; and 4) trained and

certified peer supporters and peer mentors to respond at the scene of crisis, in crisis centers, and as part of follow-up.

In addition to support for the community-level interventions above, we urge the federal government to support the development and continuation of virtual platforms for crisis response teams.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution on Addressing Toxic Exposure for Veterans

Issue: Approximately 3.5 million veterans have been exposed to burn pits that spewed toxic fumes and carcinogens into the air, but most struggle to prove the direct service connection necessary to be eligible for VA benefits to cover the associated diseases. The result is a delay in critical medical care and other supports for former servicemembers, an increase in the workload of resource-strapped County Veteran Service Officers tasked with connecting veterans to federal benefits, and the potential to shift the responsibility of providing healthcare and other services to county systems.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to pass legislation ensuring veterans who served near burn pits receive VA health coverage and disability benefits for associated medical conditions by eliminating or easing the direct service connection requirement and investing in additional research.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

HUMAN SERVICES AND EDUCATION

1 2

Interim Resolution Encouraging Congress to Provide the Resources Necessary for Developing and Expanding Arts and Cultural Programming in Counties

Issue: The National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) is the only arts funder in America, public or private, that supports the arts in 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories. Most counties across the country benefit from an NEA grant. The Challenge America funding category specifically offers support for projects that extend the reach of the arts to populations whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, economics, or disability. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of FY 2021 provided a \$5.25 million increase to the National Endowment for the Arts for national grant making as well as waiver language that allows FY 2019 and FY 2020 grants to be used for general operating support, as requested by arts advocates.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the federal government to continue to provide the resources necessary for developing and expanding arts and cultural programming in counties, parishes and boroughs throughout the U.S. NACo supports funding in Fiscal Year 2022 at \$167.5 million or above for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) to ensure that counties can continue to access these important federal funds. Counties also propose maintained or increased funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), Corporation for Public Broadcasting and Arts Education grant program within the U.S. Department of Education.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution to Update the Thrifty Food Plan Used to Calculate Benefits for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

Issue: Serving as the foundation for calculating Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, the Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) is used by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to portray what a "minimal cost," nutritionally adequate food plan entails for different households, reflecting age and gender. It is based on assumptions about dietary needs, actual consumption patterns, and food prices. While benefits are tied to inflation adjustments, the underlying TFP has not been revised since 2006.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports a thorough review and updates to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) to account for the cost of food more accurately, dietary needs, purchasing patterns and regional differences in food costs, housing and medical care, which affect the purchasing power of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution to Guarantee Access to Federal Child Nutrition Programs

Issue: Current federal child nutrition programs do not adequately meet the needs of children experiencing food insecurity, which negatively impacts their learning, physical health and overall wellbeing.

 Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to pass legislation that would guarantee all children have access to breakfast, lunch and snacks at school, in child care and during the summer months at no cost. Congress must ensure that Local Educational Agencies (LEAs) and participating childcare providers receive adequate funding and reimbursement to implement this program and meet rigorous nutrition standards, to remove administrative and resource barriers that block children in accessing the nutrition they need to thrive. We encourage Congress to additionally promote partnerships with local agricultural producers to incorporate healthy ingredients into school meals.

JUSTICE AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Interim Resolution in Opposition to Proposed Changes in the Public Assistance Program Until the COVID-19 Crisis is Resolved

Issue: Just prior to the change of Administration, FEMA released new rules for public comment that if adopted, significantly change the threshold calculation of eligibility for a Presidential declaration of disaster and for Public Assistance grant program funding. This shifts the financial burden of disaster recovery and directly impact the financial risks to local government and were made without input from local subject matter experts.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) opposes drastic, sudden, or dramatic changes to the disaster Public Assistance qualification rules until the COVID-19 crisis and recovery are completed. NACo urges the President to require the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to involve local and state Emergency Management subject matter experts in the development of future necessary changes to the Public Assistance eligibility calculations. This involvement must be during the formation of the proposed policy rule change if the change requires local and state government to significantly change their operating methods or fiscal responsibilities in disasters.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution Encouraging Congress to Fund the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Incentive Grants at the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Issue: Both the U.S. House and Senate bills include language calling on the Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) to include arts-based juvenile justice programs among its strategies.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress to provide \$61.5 million funding to the Department of Justice Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) for the purposes of including arts-based juvenile justice programs among its strategies and expanding existing programming for justice-involved youth in all counties, parishes and boroughs.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution Directing the U.S. Department of Justice to Provide Increased Funding to Local Law Enforcement for the Procurement of Body Cameras

Issue: In light of recent and historic events, increased transparency into the operations of police officers and departments has become necessary for the safety of both the alleged offender and officer. Especially in heavily policed communities, body cameras can increase the accountability of police officers, as well as protect officers from false allegations. While the majority of law enforcement agree that body cameras are a helpful tool that can be used to promote equity, procuring this equipment can be a challenge due to local funding constraints.

- 1 Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports increased funding through the
- 2 U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance to local law enforcement for the procurements of
- 3 body cameras.

4

PUBLIC LANDS

Proposed Resolution on County Approval in Land and Water Conservation Fund Implementation

Issue: The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) allows federal agencies to acquire private land and water, or an interest in private land and water, to be made public without input or approval from local government.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports a policy requiring the written approval of the local jurisdictional county or county government-equivalent for the federal acquisition of land, water, or an interest in land or water under the federal LWCF program and will work to ensure that the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture and other federal agencies will seek written approval from jurisdictional county governments prior to acquiring private lands.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY

Interim Resolution to Ensure the Participation of County Officials in the Development and Implementation of Broadband Expansion Efforts

Issue: County officials are uniquely positioned to advise and help facilitate digital connectivity for urban, rural, and tribal jurisdictions for which long-standing connectivity inequities have been made more acute by the COVID-19 pandemic. The expansion of broadband internet will require resources from all levels of government but foremost will require the integration of local government in establishing the programmatic components that will successfully implement connectivity for all communities.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges Congress and involved federal agencies to commit to the inclusion and engagement of county officials in the earliest phases of the strategic planning and expansion of broadband services and access.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

TRANSPORTATION

Interim Resolution Directing the U.S. Department of Transportation to Reinstate the Local Labor Hiring Preference Pilot Program

Issue: Since 1986, the federal regulation in 2 CFR part 200.319(c) has prevented recipients of federal grant money from including provisions that require or incentivize contractors to hire a portion of workers from communities around a given infrastructure project. At the time, the rationale for prohibiting local hire incentives was that such provisions could reduce the number of bidders on projects, resulting in an inefficient use of taxpayer dollars. However, no empirical evidence was ever cited to back up this assertion and Congress itself has never prohibited local hire.

 Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) urges the U.S. Department of Transportation to reinstate the Local Labor Hiring Preference Pilot Program that will enable counties to evaluate the impacts of utilizing certain local contracting requirements on the competitive bidding process.

Adopted | March 19, 2021

Interim Resolution Supporting Local Preference Programs on Federally-Funded Transportation & Infrastructure Projects

Issue: Federal restrictions on Local Preference Programs prohibit counties from including race- and gender-neutral geographic preferences in solicitation packages when any federal funding is involved.

Adopted Policy: The National Association of Counties (NACo) supports the use of Local Preference Programs to encourage the procurement of services from local businesses competing for suitable contracting opportunities. NACo urges Congress to waive the prohibition against local preferences in federal grant programs funded as part of COVID-19-related transportation and infrastructure bills, where counties bring at least a 25 percent local match to the federally-funded project.